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General Assembly

Official Records

Seventy-second session

116th plenary meeting
Monday, 17 September 2018, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Lajčák ..... (Slovakia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 121 (*continued*)

Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

Report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly (A/72/896)

Draft resolution (A/72/896, paragraph 89)

The President: We shall now proceed to consider the draft resolution contained in paragraph 89 of document A/72/896.

In that connection, since the report of the Ad Hoc Working Group was circulated only this morning, it will be necessary to waive the relevant provision of rule 78 of the rules of procedure, which reads as follows:

> "As a general rule, no proposal shall be discussed or put to the vote at any meeting of the General Assembly unless copies of it have been circulated to all delegations not later than the day preceding the meeting."

Unless I hear an objection, I will take it that the Assembly agrees with my proposal to waive rule 78.

It was so decided.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution, entitled "Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft resolution?

The draft resolution contained in paragraph 89 of document A/72/896 was adopted (resolution 72/313).

The President: We will now hear statements after the adoption of the resolution.

I give the floor to the representative of Algeria, who will speak on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Mr. Boukadoum (Algeria): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM), one of the largest cross-regional groups, consisting of 120 Member States.

The Non-Aligned Movement would like to express its appreciation to the President, His Excellency Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, for his interest in and commitment to strengthening the work of the General Assembly and for putting a particular concern for the transparency, efficiency and accountability of the work of the Office of the President of the General Assembly among the priorities of his mandate to lead the Assembly at its seventy-second session. The Movement thanks the Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly and all Member States for their collective efforts, which today made it possible for the General Assembly to adopt by consensus resolution 72/313, on the revitalization of the work of the Assembly.

The Non-Aligned Movement underlines the importance of the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, which is a political process rather than a procedural matter and is aimed mainly at

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strengthening the role of the Assembly as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the Organization in the wider United Nations system. The revitalization should therefore be conducted in an inclusive, democratic, transparent and efficient manner. The Non-Aligned Movement strongly believes that sustained efforts have been made to make the work of the General Assembly more focused and relevant. That has been identified as a priority since the fifty-eighth session, and the collective efforts of all Member States during subsequent sessions have contributed to streamlining the agenda, improving the practices and working methods of the Main Committees, enhancing the role of the General Committee, strengthening the role and authority of the President and enhancing the Assembly's role in the process of selecting the Secretary-General.

In that context, during its sixty-ninth, seventieth and seventy-first sessions, the Assembly adopted three landmark resolutions on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly — resolutions 69/321, 70/305 and 71/323 — which among other things have enhanced the process of selecting and appointing the Secretary-General, in particular through the joint letter of the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council launching the process and through the organization of informal dialogues to be held with candidates for the position of Secretary-General of the United Nations. The revitalization process also established an oath of office and a code of ethics for the President of the General Assembly and provided for informal interactive dialogues with candidates for that position. The practice of convening high-level thematic interactive debates is also a direct outcome of the revitalization process.

NAM continues to believe strongly that more efforts should be deployed, with the support and the political willingness of all Member States, aimed at making even greater progress, which is urgently needed to overcome the divergences that persist with respect to the various issues relating to the four interconnected clusters. However, NAM would also like to flag the fact that clarifications are still missing, particularly concerning the method applied by the Chairs and the Secretariat to establish the pattern of rotation. We regret the fact that despite the efforts that have been made, the issue has not been completely resolved. In that regard, a thorough evaluation of the status of implementation of the resolutions of the General Assembly and clear identification of the underlying causes behind any lack of implementation are crucial if we are to progressively eliminate the constraints that continue to prevent the process of revitalizing the Assembly from living up to its potential.

The Non-Aligned Movement maintains that the principles of transparency, accountability and good-faith cooperation should continue to form the basis of the work in the United Nations. We fully adhere to the letter and spirit of resolutions 69/321, 70/305 and 71/323, which are now the cornerstones for the evolution of United Nations reform, and we look forward to seeing the spirit of those resolutions strictly respected. The Non-Aligned Movement commends the support extended by the Secretariat to intergovernmental processes and believes that the continued improvement of that interaction could greatly enhance the efficiency of those processes, thereby directly contributing to the revitalization of the General Assembly.

In conclusion, NAM stresses once again that strengthening the work of the General Assembly will ensure that this "chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations" will become a true, universal "parliament of nations". To that end, the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly plays a key role in the context of the global reform of the United Nations. Nevertheless, we continue to insist that partners need to show greater flexibility, and we request that more NAM proposals be taken into account from draft zero on. I wish to humbly recall that I speak on behalf of 120 Member States.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Madagascar, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

Ms. Razafitrimo (Madagascar): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of African States, which associates itself with the statement just made by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM).

On behalf of the African Group, Mr. President, I would first like to express my sincere thanks to you and the Chairs for having successfully led the lengthy negotiations on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, which has enabled us to adopt resolution 72/313 by consensus today. I also want to express my thanks to the Secretariat for the support it has given us during this intergovernmental process. As

part of NAM, we consider that as usual, the Secretariat has shown a great deal of flexibility. We believe in the principle that the four clusters, which constitute the basis of the revitalization process, are interlinked.

The African Group reiterates the importance of the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly. For us, it a political process rather than a procedural matter, aiming mainly at strengthening the role of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the Organization in the wider United Nations system. In that regard, the revitalization process should therefore be conducted in an inclusive, democratic, transparent and efficient manner.

The African Group strongly believes that resolutions 69/321, 70/305 and 71/323, adopted by the General Assembly, are the cornerstone resolutions on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly. Among other things, they have provided for informal dialogues to be held with candidates for the position of Secretary-General. They have also established an oath of office and a code of ethics for the President of the General Assembly and have provided for informal interactive dialogues with candidates for that position. The practice of convening high-level thematic interactive debates is also a direct outcome of the revitalization process.

However, there are constraints that still prevent the process of revitalization of the General Assembly from fulfilling its potential. In that regard, a thorough evaluation of the status of the implementation of General Assembly resolutions and the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, and a clear identification of the underlying causes behind any lack of implementation, are required if we are to progressively eliminate those constraints.

In conclusion, the African Group believes that we must flag the fact that there are still clarifications missing, particularly concerning the method applied in establishing the pattern of rotation. We regret the fact that this situation remains unresolved despite all the efforts. Regardless of that, the African Group has decided to join the consensus and requests that its position on this issue be formally registered.

Finally, we insist that all Member States show more flexibility, and we stress the urgent need to foster a more empowered General Assembly without encroachments on its powers or functions.

The President: I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Van Den Akker (European Union): I thank you, Mr. President, on behalf of the European Union and its member States, for your personal commitment to this important agenda item.

On behalf of the European Union and its member States, I would also like to warmly thank the co-Chairs and their respective teams for their efforts and wisdom and for having guided us through the negotiations, which resulted in the adoption of resolution 72/313 today.

The European Union and its member States joined the consensus on the resolution, since we believe that it has significantly gained in importance over the past few years. We are disappointed that last year's language on civil-society participation in General Assembly meetings could not be retained. We believe that it is crucial for the United Nations to be as open, transparent and accountable as possible and that the participation of civil society is important for our credibility as an organization.

In addition, we regret the fact that no agreement could be reached on the language regarding the allocation of dedicated Secretariat staff to the Office of the President of the General Assembly.

However, on both issues, the European Union and its member States will be guided by the language agreed in last year's resolution 71/323. Allow me also to warmly thank the Secretariat for its support throughout the process.

The President: We have heard the last speaker on this item.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Ambassadors Vladimir Drobnjak of Croatia and Maria Emma Mejía Vélez of Colombia, co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly, for having so ably conducted discussions and led the complex negotiations of the Working Group. I am sure that members of the Assembly will join me in extending our sincere appreciation to them.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 121?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 31

Elimination of unilateral extraterritorial coercive economic measures as a means of political and economic compulsion

The President: Members will recall that, at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 15 September 2017, the Assembly decided to include this item on the agenda of the seventy-second session. In its resolution 58/316, the General Assembly decided that the item should be considered every three years. It is my understanding that the item will therefore be included on the provisional agenda of the seventy-fifth session.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 31?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 32

Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies

The President: Members will recall that, at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 15 September 2017, the Assembly decided to include this item on the agenda of the seventy-second session. In its resolution 55/285, the General Assembly decided that the item should be considered biennially, starting from its fifty-sixth session. It is my understanding that the item will therefore be included in the provisional agenda of the seventy-fourth session.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 32?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 34

Prevention of armed conflict

(a) Prevention of armed conflict

The President: Members will recall that, at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 15 September 2017, the Assembly decided to include this sub-item on the agenda of the seventy-second session. It is my understanding that it would be desirable to include it on the draft agenda of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to include sub-item (a) of agenda item 34 on the draft agenda of the seventy-third session?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 34?

It was so decided.

(b) Strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution

The President: Members will recall that, at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 15 September 2017, the Assembly decided to include this sub-item on the agenda of the seventy-second session. In connection with this sub-item, I have received a letter dated 2 May 2018 from the Permanent Representatives of Finland and Turkey to the United Nations, in their capacity as the co-Chairs of the Group of Friends of Mediation, requesting the inclusion of this sub-item on the draft agenda of the seventy-third session of the Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to defer consideration of sub-item (b) and include it on the draft agenda of its seventy-third session?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 34 and agenda item 34 as a whole?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 36

Zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic

The President: Members will recall that, at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 15 September 2017, the Assembly decided to include this item on the agenda of the seventy-second session. In connection with this item, I have received a request from the representative of Brazil that consideration of this item be deferred to the seventy-third session of the Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it on the draft agenda of its seventy-third session?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 36?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 40

The situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan

The President: Members will recall that, at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 15 September 2017, the Assembly decided to include this item on the agenda of the seventy-second session. In connection with this item, I have received a letter dated 6 August 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations requesting that consideration of this item be deferred to the seventy-third session of the Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it on the draft agenda of its seventy-third session?

It was so decided.

Ms. Simonyan (Armenia): My delegation would like to put on record the fact that Armenia dissociates itself from the decision to include agenda item 40 on the draft agenda of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 40?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 41

Question of the Comorian island of Mayotte

The President: Members will recall that, at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 15 September 2017, the Assembly decided to include this item on its agenda, on the understanding that there would be no consideration of this item by the Assembly until further notice. In connection with this item, I have received a note verbale dated 17 May 2018 from the Permanent Mission of the Comoros to the United Nations requesting the inclusion of this item on the draft agenda of the seventy-third session.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to include this item on the draft agenda of its seventy-third session?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 41?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 43

The situation in Central America: progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development

The President: Members will recall that, at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 15 September 2017, the Assembly decided to include this item on the agenda of the seventy-second session, in accordance with decision 60/508 of 31 October 2005. In decision 60/508, the General Assembly decided that this item shall remain on the agenda for consideration upon notification by a Member State. Accordingly, this item has been included on the draft agenda of the seventy-third session.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 43?

It was so decided.

Agenda items 44 to 49

Question of Cyprus

Armed aggression against the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas)

The situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti

Armed Israeli aggression against the Iraqi nuclear installations and its grave consequences for the established international system concerning the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and international peace and security

Consequences of the Iraqi occupation of and aggression against Kuwait

The President: Members will recall that, at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 15 September 2017, the Assembly decided to include items 44 to 49 on the agenda of the seventy-second session, in accordance with paragraph 4 (b) of the annex to its resolution 58/316, of 1 July

2004. In resolution 58/316, the General Assembly decided that these items shall remain on the agenda for consideration upon notification by a Member State. Accordingly, these items have been included on the draft agenda of the seventy-third session.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda items 44 to 49?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 88

Request for an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965

The President: Members will recall that, at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 15 September 2017, the Assembly decided to include this item on the agenda of the seventy-second session. In resolution 71/292, the General Assembly decided, in accordance with Article 96 of the Charter of the United Nations, to request the International Court of Justice, pursuant to Article 65 of the Statute of the Court, to render an advisory opinion.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to include this item on the draft agenda of its seventy-third session?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 88?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 120 (*continued*)

Implementation of the resolutions of the United Nations

The President: Members will recall that, at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 15 September 2017, the Assembly decided to include this item on the agenda of the seventy-second session. It is my understanding that it would be desirable to include this item on the draft agenda of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to include this item on the draft agenda of its seventy-third session?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 120?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 123 (*continued*)

Strengthening of the United Nations system

The President: Members will recall that, at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 15 September 2017, the Assembly decided to include this item on the agenda of the seventy-second session. It is my understanding that it would be desirable to include this item on the draft agenda of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to include this item on the draft agenda of its seventy-third session?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 123?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 124 (*continued*)

United Nations reform: measures and proposals

The President: Members will recall that, at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 15 September 2017, the Assembly decided to include this itemon the agenda of the seventy-second session. In its resolution 55/285, the General Assembly decided that this item would be considered biennially, starting from its fifty-sixth session. It is my understanding that the item will therefore be included on the provisional agenda of the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 124?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 155

Financing of the United Nations Mission in East Timor

The President: Members will recall that, at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 15 September 2017, the Assembly decided to include this item on the agenda of the seventy-second session. It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the seventy-third session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to defer its consideration of agenda item 155 and to include it on the draft agenda of its seventy-third session?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 155?

It was so decided.

The President: I should like to remind delegations that the following agenda items, on which action has been taken at previous meetings, remain open for consideration during the seventy-second session of the General Assembly: items 9, 14, 15, 19, 22, 22 (b), 24, 24 (a), 24 (b), 29, 35, 37, 38, 55, 65, 72, 72 (c), 73, 73 (a) through (c), 99, 99 (cc), 107, 113, 114, 114 (a) and (b), 117, 127, 130, 133 to 137, 139 to 143, 145 to 154 and 156 to 165.

As members are aware, those items have been included on the draft agenda of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly, with the exception of sub-item (b) of agenda item 114, entitled "Election of the Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme"; agenda item 135, entitled "Programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017"; and agenda item 147, entitled "Financing of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991".

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to include agenda items 9, 14, 15, 19, 22, 22 (b), 24, 24 (a) and (b), 29, 35, 37, 38, 55, 65, 72, 72 (c), 73, 73 (a) through (c), 99, 99 (cc), 107, 113, 114, 114 (a), 117, 127, 130, 133, 134, 136, 137, 139 to 143, 145, 146, 148 to 154 and 156 to 165 on the draft agenda of its seventy-third session?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda items 9, 14, 15, 19, 22, 22 (b), 24, 24 (a), 24 (b), 29, 35, 37, 38, 55, 65, 72, 72 (c), 73, 73 (a), 73 (b), 73 (c), 99, 99 (cc), 107, 113, 114, 114 (a) and (b), 117, 127, 130, 133 to 137, 139 to 143, 145 to 154 and 156 to 165?

It was so decided.

Programme of work

The President: I would like to draw members' attention to the letter of the President dated 16 September 2018 concerning the high-level meeting on the fight against tuberculosis.

Members will recall that in its resolution 72/268 of 4 April 2018, the Assembly decided that the high-level meeting would be held on the second day of the general debate of the Assembly at its seventy-third session, from 10.30 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., that its opening segment would be held from 10.30 a.m. to 11.30 a.m., and that its plenary segment would be held from 11.30 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 p.m. to 5.30 p.m.

In that connection, and as announced in the letter just mentioned, I propose, under agenda item 127, entitled "Global health and foreign policy", that the high-level meeting be held from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., that its opening segment be held from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m., and that its plenary segment be held from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 p.m. to 5.30 p.m.

In order for the Assembly to take up this proposal, it must first agree, under rule 81 of its rules of procedure, to reconsider the provision contained in paragraphs 1 and 3 of resolution 72/268.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to reconsider the provision contained in paragraphs 1 and 3 of resolution 72/268?

It was so decided.

The President: May I also take it that the General Assembly wishes to decide that the high-level meeting on the fight against tuberculosis shall be held on the second day of the general debate of the Assembly at its seventy-third session from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., that its opening segment shall be held from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m., and that its plenary segment shall be held from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 p.m. to 5.30 p.m.?

It was so decided.

The President: Before adjourning the meeting, I would like to consult members on inviting, as mentioned in my letter dated 14 September 2018, the following speakers to make statements during the commemorative plenary meeting, to be held on 21 September 2018, to pay tribute to the late former Secretary-General Kofi Annan: Mr. Ban Ki-moon, former Secretary-General of the United Nations; Mrs. Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland and member of The Elders; Mrs. Nane Annan, spouse of Kofi Annan; Mr. Iqbal Riza, former Under-Secretary-General and Chef de Cabinet; Ms. Anastasiya Delenda, former staff member of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General; and a family member of the late former Secretary-General Kofi Annan to speak on behalf of his children.

If there is no objection, may I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly, without setting a precedent, to invite those speakers to make statements at the commemorative meeting?

It was so decided.

The President: I would also like to inform Member States that, as announced in the *Journal of the United Nations* today, the closing of the seventy-second session will be held this afternoon at 3 p.m.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.